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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [ASEC](#) [PETER](#) [SNAR](#) [GT](#) [ES](#)  
SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: POLICEMEN ARRESTED FOR ASSASSINATION  
OF SALVADORAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

REF: GUATEMALA 348

1. (SBU) In a February 21 press conference, Guatemalan Minister of Government Carlos Vielmann announced the arrests of four members of the Guatemalan Civilian National Police (PNC) on charges of committing the brutal murders of three Salvadoran representatives to the Central American Parliament and a bodyguard/driver (reftel). Two other members of the PNC believed to have been involved in the crime are still at large. One of the arrested PNC members was the Chief of the Banking Section in the Organized Crime Unit in the PNC's Criminal Investigation Department (DINC). The three other detainees also belonged to the Organized Crime Unit in the DINC, the primary investigative organ of the PNC. GOG authorities declined to speculate publicly on the motives of the PNC members, saying that the investigation is still in progress. However, we have heard from GOG sources that they believe the Salvadoran parliamentarians may have been carrying a large amount of cash in U.S. dollars that was presumably stolen.

2. (SBU) Comment: It appears that this multiple homicide was part of a robbery perpetrated by fairly senior police officials. PNC involvement in robberies and other criminal activity has been a persistent problem in Guatemala. This crime mimics the December 2005 execution and burning of the owner of a currency exchange business and his four armed bodyguards in Santa Rosa, a department near the Salvadoran border; the bodies were discovered in a burned vehicle in an isolated rural area. This crime was also committed by PNC members; the ringleader, a mid-level PNC supervisor, is currently in jail awaiting prosecution for running a stolen car ring in Guatemala City. Minister of Government Vielmann is determined to clean up the police and has ordered a record number of arrests of corrupt cops. Quick action on the part of several GOG agencies, including the Prosecutor General's Office (Public Ministry), led to rapid arrests in the case of the Salvadoran parliamentarians.

Lindwall